

## CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION MINUTES

August 18, 2009

The City Council of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in study session at 5:40 p.m. in the Municipal Building Conference Room on the 18th day of August, 2009, and notice and agenda of the meeting were posted at the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray, and the Norman Public Library at 225 North Webster 48 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

PRESENT:

Councilmembers Atkins, Butler, Dillingham,  
Griffith, Kovach, Quinn, Mayor Rosenthal

ABSENT:

Councilmembers Cubberley and Ezzell

### DISCUSSION BY CONSULTANT CHRIS TATHAM FROM THE ETC INSTITUTE REGARDING THE RESULTS OF THE 2009 NORMAN COMMUNITY SURVEY.

Mr. Steve Lewis, City Manager, said Council discussed conducting a citizen survey at their annual planning retreat last year. He said conducting an annual or biannual survey is a way for citizens to provide information on City services and for staff to gauge the value of those services to the residents. He said since the last city-wide survey was conducted in 1989, this survey will serve as a good baseline of City services to analyze improvement year after year. It provides management with an accurate tool to answer questions and establish guidelines to address citizens' questions and concerns and establishes benchmarks for the City with other like communities. He introduced Mr. Chris Tatham from ETC Institute who reviewed the methodology of survey and provided an overview of the survey results.

Mr. Tatham said the survey was mailed to a random sample of 845 residents, at least 100 from each ward, as well as telephone contacts with good representation from all demographic groups. He said the bottom line overall is Norman is a great place to live and the City is doing a very good job. He went on to say not only do the residents like it here, but Norman received some of the best ratings in the country that he has seen for community quality indicators and the City is doing an excellent job of providing City services. He said the City's customer service ratings and overall perceptions of the quality of City services tower among the average comparable communities across the country.

Mr. Tatham highlighted the perceptions of residents through strategic indicators. He said if the City is doing well on these areas, oftentimes the City will continue to attract and grow in a healthy way as a community. Resident perceptions included in the survey cover areas like appearance; overall quality of City services; public schools and associated programs; the hospital and associated medical services; and quality of new development. Participants are asked to rate most services on a scale of 1 to 5 where 4's and 5's are satisfied and 3 is a neutral response, which is not necessarily good or bad and the don't knows are excluded. He said neutral responses on average indicate residents are ok with the service. Typically they have had a real good experience, they know it is out there, and are not dissatisfied with it. He emphasized on Overall Quality of City Services, 79% or almost 8 out 10 residents gave positive ratings, and only 2% of residents said they were dissatisfied.

Other results outlined in the survey are listed below by *category and the percentage of residents **satisfied*** with the service:

#### Perceptions of Norman

Appearance of the City - 83%

Public schools and associated programs - 77%

Hospital and associated services - 70%

Overall appearance of downtown - 67%

Overall quality of new development - 60%

Overall value received for City taxes and fees – 54%

Availability of job opportunities – 49%

Overall Satisfaction with Various Aspects of City Services

Overall quality of fire services – 91%  
Overall quality of police services -76%  
Quality of trash/recycling/yard waste services - 83%  
Quality of parks and recreation programs and facilities - 78%  
Quality of customer service from City staff – 74%  
Overall maintenance of City buildings – 68%  
Quality of City water/wastewater utilities – 67%  
Overall quality of Municipal Court – 58%  
Effectiveness of City communication with public – 57%  
Efforts by the City to enforce codes/ordinances – 55%  
Efforts to provide public transportation services – 49%  
Management of storm water runoff by the City – 46%  
Management of traffic flow on City streets – 44%  
Overall maintenance of City streets/sidewalks – 41%

Communication

Availability of information on City programs/services – 62%  
City efforts to inform residents on local issues – 55%  
Usefulness of information that is available on the City's website – 54%  
User-friendliness of the City web site – 52%  
Quality of the City's cable television channel – 45%  
Level of public involvement in City decision-making – 42%  
Transparency of City government – 41%

Customer Service (% of respondents who used the following City services/facilities in the past 12 months)

Visited a neighborhood or community – 85%  
Visited the City's web site – 53%  
Watched the City's cable television Channel 20 – 40%  
Visited City recreation centers – 40%  
Called or visited the Police Department – 33%  
Participated in recreation programs offered by the City – 32%  
Called Code Enforcement – 17%  
Used fire services – 10%  
Used public transportation services supported by the City – 10%  
Accuracy of information/assistance given upon contact – 75%  
Satisfaction with how quickly City staff responded to request – 71%  
Satisfaction with how well issue was handled – 69%

Parks and Recreation

Maintenance/appearance of existing City parks – 80%  
Number of City parks – 75%  
Quality of outdoor athletic facilities – 67%  
City golf course – 63%  
City swimming pool – 49%  
Walking trails in the City – 46%  
Biking routes in the City – 38%

Maintenance Services

Condition of street signs and traffic signals – 75%  
Cleanliness of City streets/other public areas – 71%  
Mowing/tree trimming on City streets/public areas – 63%  
Maintenance of streets in neighborhoods – 58%  
Maintenance of City sidewalks in neighborhoods – 56%

Maintenance Services, continued

Maintenance of major City streets – 54%  
Maintenance of storm water drains – 49%  
Timing of traffic signals – 47%  
Clearing of storm drainage channels 46%  
How quickly street repairs are made – 39%

Code Enforcement

Exterior maintenance of commercial/business property – 59%  
Mowing/cutting of weeds/grass on private property – 52%  
Clean up of junk and debris on private property – 51%  
Exterior maintenance of residential property – 51%  
Regulation of illegal signs – 50%

Solid Waste/Utility Services

Residential trash collection services – 92%  
Timeliness of utility bill – 86%  
Ease of paying utility bill – 86%  
Yard waste collection services – 86%  
Accuracy of utility bill – 86%  
Fall and spring cleanup – 85%  
Curbside recycling services – 79%  
Hazardous household waste event – 65%  
Bulky item pickup/removal services – 62%  
Drop off recycling locations – 71%

Sewer, Water, and Storm Water

Water pressure in your home – 77%  
Adequacy of your sewer service during a rainfall – 73%  
Responsiveness to emergency repair calls for leaks – 69%  
Drainage of rain from property next to your residence – 65%  
Water/sewer utility charges – 60%  
Clarity/taste of the tap water in your home – 59%  
Drainage of rain water off City streets – 48%

Transportation and Other Issues

Opportunities to attend cultural/festival activities – 87%  
Ease of travel by car in the city – 67%  
Availability of affordable housing in Norman – 66%  
Ease of walking in the city – 61%  
Adequacy of public parking downtown – 54%  
Availability of public transportation services in Norman – 47%  
Effectiveness of speed humps – 43%  
Ease of biking in the city – 42%

Diversity Issues

Important for the City to encourage diversity – 82%  
Norman promotes diversity – 71%  
City promotes diversity in its own work force – 63%  
City does a good job serving specialized population – 59%  
Discrimination is not a problem in Norman – 54%

Mayor Rosenthal asked that the data related to diversity issues be shared with the Human Rights Commission who are working with diversity through the Community Dialogue meetings.

Capital Improvement Projects – (percentage of high importance for City investment)

Outdoor storm siren warning system replacement – 83%

City Library – 81%

Material recovery facility – 82%

Animal shelter improvements/renovation/expansion – 78%

Municipal Court – 62%

Storm water improvements – 77%

5-Year Street Bond issue (no tax increase) – 74%

Overall Ratings of the City

Norman as a place to live – 96%

Norman as a place to raise children – 94%

Norman as a place to work – 82%

Norman as a place to retire – 77%

Norman as a place to visit – 77%

Mr. Thatham summarized the survey information by saying Norman is setting the standard for the overall quality of city services at 21% above the national average. He said Norman rated above the national average in 24 of 36 areas and exceptional ratings were achieved in areas of public safety, customer service, and communication. He said areas to emphasize over the next two years should be maintenance of City streets and sidewalks; management of traffic flow on City streets; biking routes and walking trails; and the frequency police officers patrol neighborhoods. He said storm water improvements are very important to residents and residents are generally supportive of a 5-year street bond issue.

City Manager Lewis said the survey will be available on the City's web site as well as copies placed at the Norman Public Library. Mayor Rosenthal asked staff to consider other locations such as the Chamber of Commerce.

Mayor Rosenthal congratulated staff on the results of the survey and said the information will be good for Council to use during the annual planning retreat. She said it is good not to become complacent with the results, but continue to strive for improvement.

Items submitted for the record

1. 2009 Citizens Survey Additional Public Policy/Service Expansion Questions
2. PowerPoint presentation entitled, "*2009 DirectionFinder Survey, City of Norman*" prepared by ETC Institute

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

ATTEST:

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City Clerk

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Mayor